

Remarks

Reconsideration and reexamination of the above-identified patent application are respectfully requested. Claims 1-20 are pending in this application upon entry of this Reply. In this Reply, no claims have been amended, added, canceled, or withdrawn.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,596,712 to Tsuyama et al. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejections. Applicants submit that a finding of anticipation requires the disclosure in a single prior art reference of *each element* of the claim under consideration. Claim 1 recites, among other limitations,

"automatically detecting an identifier for an item in a manufacturing or assembly process;
comparing the detected item identifier with the one or more suspect item definitions; and
if the detected item identifier falls within one or more of the suspect item definitions, automatically isolating the item in the manufacturing or assembly process."

Tsuyama does not teach the foregoing limitations. Rather, Tsuyama teaches "a computer- implemented method and system for diagnosing and system for diagnosing and analyzing fault information of a product" (Abstract)

As stated above, Tsuyama does not disclose the limitation of automatically detecting an identifier for an item in a manufacturing or assembly process. Specifically, Tsuyama teaches searching for a fault tree in response to the input of new fault information. In particular, Tsuyama discloses that the method includes "responding to the input of the new fault information for searching for the fault tree in accordance with the weighting coefficients

on the basis of the fault information stored in the storage unit" (Col. 2, lines 30-34) In Tsuyama, the fault tree represents causal relations between faults and causes thereof. Tsuyama further discloses that, "when a fault occurs in a machine or apparatus being used by a customer, the cause of the fault can be pinpointed by searching for the fault tree on the basis of the symptom" (Col. 3, lines 36-39) Thus, Tsuyama teaches searching a fault tree for a fault and not automatically detecting an identifier for an item in a manufacturing or assembly process.

Furthermore, Tsuyama does not disclose comparing the detected item identifier with one or more suspect item definitions. In particular, Tsuyama discloses "generating and outputting information concerning an adjustment or repair of the product suffering from the fault based on the determined cause of the fault as well as the information concerning the structure and the characteristics of the product." (Abstract) Applicant submits that the quoted excerpt from the Abstract of Tsuyama merely discloses producing information related to a product modification based on the cause of a fault and product characteristics and structure. Accordingly, Tsuyama does not disclose comparing the detected item identifier with the one or more suspect item definitions.

Moreover, Tsuyama does not disclose that, "if the detected item identifier falls within one or more of the suspect item definitions, automatically isolating the item in a manufacturing or assembly process." As discussed in the foregoing, Tsuyama merely discloses creating a fault tree that represents causal relations between faults and causes thereof, as well as producing information related to product modification based on the cause of the fault and product characteristics and structure. (Abstract) Thus, there is no teaching or suggestion by Tsuyama of automatically isolating the item in the manufacturing or assembly process if the detected item identifier falls within one or more of the suspect item definitions.

Additionally, Applicants submit that the structure and function of the Tsuyama reference and independent claim 1 are entirely different. Tsuyama is directed to analyzing fault information of a product and searching for a causal relation of trouble or a product fault.

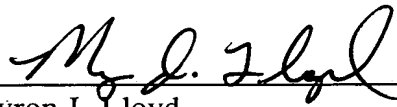
(Abstract; Col. 1, lines 7-10) Claim 1 recites, a method for *automatically isolating suspect items* in a manufacturing environment. Accordingly, as disclosed by Tsuyama, the object of Tsuyama is to solve the problems of the prior art techniques and provide a method and a system that diagnoses and analyzes specific fault information of products to thereby perform rapid and effective repair of those products which suffer from the fault. (Col. 2, lines 10-15) Thus, Tsuyama is not directed to automatically isolating suspect items in a manufacturing environment. Applicants respectfully submit that a *prima facie* case of anticipation has not been established because the Tsuyama reference does not disclose each element of the claim under consideration. As such, claim 1 is patentable over the cited art for at least the foregoing reasons. Dependent claims 2-12 depend from independent claim 1 and are likewise patentable for at least the foregoing reasons. Independent claim 13 recites substantially the same limitations as independent claim 1. For at least the same reasons independent claim 1 is patentable over the cited art, independent claim 13 is likewise patentable. Claims 14-20 depend from independent claim 13 and are likewise patentable for at least the foregoing reasons. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections.

Conclusion

In summary, claims 1-20 meet the substantive requirements for patentability. The case is in appropriate condition for allowance. Accordingly, such action is respectfully requested. If a telephone or video conference would expedite allowance or resolve any further questions, such a conference is invited at the convenience of the Examiner.

Respectfully submitted,

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